REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

IDS

It appears that the Examiner received the IDS filed June 23, 2005 containing JP 10-125648 and JP2001-319910. The Examiner is requested to acknowledge these references on a PTO-1449 form. Enclosed is a new 1449 form for the Examiner's use in acknowledging these references.

Another IDS was filed electronically on August 8, 2006. It is assumed that it did not reach the Examiner in time to be acknowledged in the present application.

RESPONSE

Claims 2-7 and 55 have been rejected as anticipated by JP10-116805. Claims 9, 10, 47-48 and 50-53 have been rejected as obvious over JP'805 in view of Wen. Claims 11 and 54 have been rejected over JP'805, Wen, and Matsukawa et al.

As amended herein, independent claims 4, 9 and 55 recite that "said atmosphere blocking member has a diameter which is smaller than a diameter of a substrate by a width of a notch at a periphery edge of the substrate". See page 25, lines 8-15. The invention described in JP '805 (JP10-116805) has similarities, but does not have this feature. New claims 56-58 depend from the independent claims and recite a combination of the claimed substrate processing system, with a substrate having a peripheral notch. By adopting the new structure, the following advantageous effects, which are never described in the cited reference, can be achieved in the present invention. Specifically, in the case that the atmosphere blocking member has the diameter which is smaller than the diameter of the substrate by the width of the notch at the periphery edge of the substrate, a periphery edge area of the atmosphere blocking member is not exposed to a mist-splashed

atmosphere around the substrate through the notch at the periphery edge of the substrate. Consequently, the mist created during the substitute processing can be prevented from being kicked back by the periphery edge of the atmosphere blocking member and toward the other major surface of the substrate.

Thus, according to the present invention, since the atmosphere blocking member has the diameter which is smaller than the diameter of the substrate by the width of the notch at the periphery edge of the substrate, the mist created during the substrate processing can be securely prevented from adhering to the other major surface of the substrate.

On the contrary, there is no description or even suggestion in JP '805 regarding a structure wherein the atmosphere blocking member has a diameter which is smaller than the diameter of a substrate by the width of any notch at the periphery edge of the substrate.

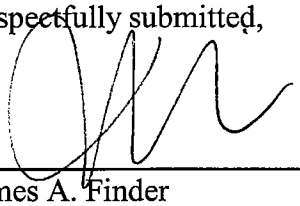
Further, Wen (U.S. Patent No. 6,239,038) neither describes nor suggests a structure wherein the atmosphere blocking member has a diameter which is smaller than the diameter of a substrate by the width of any notch at the periphery edge of the substrate. That is, Wen merely discloses beveled fingers (42) which adjustably support a substrate depending on a size of the substrate.

In addition, there is no description in the cited references that predicts above-mentioned effects of the present invention. Therefore, the claimed structure of the atmosphere blocking member of the independent claims is neither anticipated nor suggested by the cited references.

THIS CORRESPONDENCE IS BEING SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY THROUGH THE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE EFS FILING SYSTEM ON November 8, 2006.

JAF:lf

Respectfully submitted,



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